ANNUAL REPORT
1988-89

ALBERTA HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DISCIPLINES COMMITTEE

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Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Alberta Health & Social Services Disciplines Committee
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I. Introduction

This is the twelfth *Annual Report* of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. It outlines the history, mandate and structure of the Committee and describes the Committee's activities during the period of April 1, 1988 to March 31, 1989.

A. History of the Committee

The need to coordinate manpower planning activities was formally recognized in 1973 with the establishment of the Alberta Health Manpower Committee. This Committee was responsible for determining manpower needs in health services. At that time, the Committee consisted of senior officials from the Departments of Health and Social Development; Labour and Manpower; Advanced Education; and the Alberta Hospitals Services Commission. The Deputy Minister of Health and Social Development served as Chairman.

In 1975, as a result of reorganization of government departments, a new interdepartmental coordinating body was formed: the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee. The Departments of Social Services and Community Health; Advanced Education and Manpower; and Hospitals and Medical Care were represented on the Committee. The Committee's mandate, as set out by Ministerial Order in August 1976, was expanded to include manpower planning for social services. Since that time, the Chairman has been appointed from outside government, serving as a public representative as well as a facilitator.

Since 1976, changes to the Committee's makeup have followed governmental reorganizations.

B. Mandate of the Committee

The availability of an adequate supply of appropriately trained personnel is essential to meet Alberta's health care and social service needs. Adequate planning and research must be carried out to ensure the balance of supply and demand is carefully monitored. Since this responsibility does not rest solely with one department, the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee acts as a coordinating body to carry out work in this area. The Committee performs the following functions:

- Advises government on major health and social service manpower training and related issues;
- Coordinates the planning and research activities of participating departments in the area of health and social service manpower;
- Collects relevant up-to-date manpower data for research purposes.

The Committee's Terms of Reference are found in Appendix A on page 11.

C. Structure and Membership of the Committee

As of March 31, 1989, the Committee had representation from the following government departments: Advanced Education; Career Development and Employment; Health; and Social Services as well as the Professions and Occupations Bureau. The Committee reports to the Minister and Deputy Minister of each department; Dr. Ian C. Reid, Minister Responsible for Professions and Occupations was lead Minister. Mr. Elvin Christenson, F.C.A., served as Chairman.

The work of the Committee is supported by an Executive Secretary and Secretariat consisting of research staff from participating departments. In addition, a group of staff known as the manpower planning unit provides administrative and research assistance to the Committee. The unit is responsible for the ongoing collection of data through surveys or studies, publication of annual documents and other administrative and research functions in accordance with the Committee's current workplan. The manpower planning unit is administratively based in the Professions and Occupations Bureau under the supervision of the Executive Secretary.

A list of members of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee and its Secretariat for the 1988-89 year appears in Appendix B on page 12.

II. Health and Social Service Manpower Policy

The primary responsibility of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee is to advise Ministers and Deputy Ministers of the participating departments on major human service resource issues. During the past year, governments across the country have focussed their attention on the spiralling cost of health care services. Since the major part of these costs can be attributed to expenditures for manpower, and since demand is closely tied to the availability of funds, the Committee has become increasingly sensitive to budgetary considerations.

In addition to monitoring the impact of economic conditions, the Committee has been concerned with other factors which influence manpower supply and demand. Demographic change such as the aging of the population is creating an increased demand for services while at the same time the availability of personnel to meet this demand may be decreasing due to the declining birth rate. Changes in technology have also created demands for specific health and social service personnel and these demands in future are likely to become even more pronounced. The trend to community-based rather than institutional-based services is another change which is affecting the type of personnel required in the health and social service sector. The Committee must monitor these societal changes and determine their impact on manpower supply and demand.

The Committee drew up a work-plan as a guide to projects it would strive to undertake in the 1988-89 year. The Chairman and Executive Secretary met with the Deputy Ministers of the participating departments to discuss the proposed plan and obtain their comments and suggested changes. The following is a brief summary of the specific activities undertaken in the past year based on the revised work-plan.

A. Part-time and Casual Employment

Through its annual survey of employers, the Committee was aware that the ratio of part-time to full-time employment had been increasing over the past years. The extent of casual employment was unknown since past surveys only collected information on regular or permanent employees. Changes from full-time to part-time or casual employment have a significant impact on the total number of personnel required to provide services and in turn impact on the number of individuals who need to complete training programs. A study was undertaken to examine this issue more closely. Sixteen health and social service occupational groups were chosen for the study. Professional associations and licensing bodies cooperated in providing data on these groups. Interviews were conducted with representatives from the service sector, professional associations and unions to obtain their views on the reasons for changing work-patterns and possible impact these changes are creating. The report "Part-time and Casual Employment in Selected Health and Social Service Groups in Alberta" will be circulated to participating groups in the near future.

B. Manpower Requirements for Day Care Centres

In the Throne Speech which opened the 1989 spring sitting of the Legislature, the government announced plans to implement qualification requirements for child care workers in day care centres. Operators of day care centres were surveyed for the first time as part of the March 31, 1988 employer survey. A special questionnaire was designed to collect information on employees' educational qualifications, their studies in progress and work experience in day care centres or related settings. Information collected was analyzed and the report "Day Care Personnel in Alberta, An Analysis of the 1988 Survey of Health Care and Social Service Employees" has been prepared for the Committee's review. The findings will assist government in planning sufficient training programs and spaces to meet future demand.

C. Manpower and Training Requirements for Alberta's Native Population

The Native population across Canada is requesting more opportunities to become self-governing. As a result, Indian Bands and Tribal Councils are expected to gradually become more responsible for delivery of health and social service programs. The Committee examined options in qualifications needed to fill the demand in this area: formal certification through the existing educational system; cross-cultural training of non-Native workers; and the introduction of a "new service provider." The latter approach could assist Native adults to be employed in entry level positions based on skill competency rather than credentials. By combining in-service courses, formal studies, examination of competencies and work experience, such workers could advance to positions of greater responsibility. Formal accreditation standards would still need to be met at appropriate levels to avoid a double standard. The Committee felt this was a viable option to meet training needs in Native communities, particularly in the delivery of social services. Since an Intergovernmental Committee on Native Employment is also studying this matter, the Disciplines Committee will monitor developments and review the findings of the Intergovernmental Committee before undertaking further work.

D. Alberta's New Social Policy

In March 1988, the government released the document "Statement of Social Policy for Alberta." This policy contains principles which are to serve as guidelines for the delivery of government programs. Manpower requirements in the health and social service sector will be affected by a number of the principles contained in the policy. For example, independence and responsibility are two principles in the policy which will affect how services are provided. As an initial step to examine the impact of the social policy, a discussion was held on the policy and how its principles will affect future delivery of service. Dr. S. Remple, Deputy Minister of Social Services was invited to present his views and discuss changes which that department plans to implement to align with the policy. In future, the Committee will consider the principles contained in the policy document as guidance for all its manpower planning activities.

E. Incentives to Attract Health and Social Service Personnel to Non-Urban Areas

Recruitment and retention of personnel in northern and rural areas have been chronic problems not only in Alberta but in all jurisdictions. A number of government incentive programs have been established in an attempt to influence the balance of personnel. For the most part, these programs have not been evaluated to determine their effectiveness. In some cases, employers have also initiated incentive programs to attract

health and social service employees to their region. No inventory of these incentive programs is available. The Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee is interested in knowing what programs exist, how they are being utilized and their effectiveness in attracting and retaining personnel to positions located outside urban areas. A study to examine this subject was initiated early in 1989 and is scheduled to be completed in the next reporting period.

F. Physician Manpower

Since physician manpower is the specific mandate of the External Advisory Committee on Physician Manpower, the Disciplines Committee is generally not involved in studies applicable to this group. However, the issue of refugees who were trained in medicine in countries outside Canada and are now seeking licensure to practise in Alberta was raised with the Committee. Since this matter is complex and related to many other issues, the Committee established a working group to review the current practices to ensure the selection process for medical school enrolment and post medical degree training is equitable and best serves the needs of the population as a whole.

G. Nursing Manpower Projections Model

In 1988, the Disciplines Committee revised and updated the Nursing Manpower Model which was originally developed in 1983. This computer-based model provides projections on the number of nurses required in the province until 1992. In June 1988, the "Alberta Nursing Manpower Projections Report" was circulated to interested groups for their review. Although the model projects an adequate supply of nurses for the next five years, it does not take into account unbalanced distribution of personnel or seasonal demands. Nor does it address needs in particular specialty areas such as intensive care, long term care or psychiatric nursing where shortages are being experienced. These deficiencies were discussed by the Committee; it will be a challenge to further refine the model to give greater data precision.

H. Professional Legislation

Since regulation of professions and services impact on manpower supply and demand, the Committee kept current on changes in legislation. In addition, the Committee's representatives on the Federal/Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources participated in a review of provincial legislation governing pharmacists, dentists, dental assistants, dental hygienists, dental technicians, and denturists.

I. Other Manpower Issues

In addition to the specific projects previously described, the Disciplines Committee discussed other issues as they arose during the year. These included the supply of dental manpower; proposed changes to the training programs for psychiatric nurses and speech pathologists; the impact of government initiatives in speech pathology on the demand for employment of that professional group; and the impact of mega projects on manpower needs of the region.

The Committee encouraged other government departments, the service sector and educational services to examine their own health and social service requirements. Survey data were shared with these groups in order to assist in carrying out their particular research and planning activities.

III. Planning Coordination and Liaison

Through the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee, the participating departments are able to keep informed on developments which affect manpower. The Committee met ten times during the 1988-89 period; the Secretariat met as required to prepare for Committee meetings or studies. These exchanges provided a means of communication and cooperation in research and planning activities.

In addition to consultation between departments, the Committee and its Secretariat maintained contact with representatives of professional associations, post-secondary educational institutions, the service sector and other organizations or committees. Exchange of information between these groups is important since manpower issues are of concern to all.

The Committee maintained membership on the Federal/Provincial Advisory Committee on Health Human Resources in order to keep current with manpower issues facing other jurisdictions. This intergovernmental body meets biannually and reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health. Its membership consists of representatives from the federal government, all provinces, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. The Committee undertakes studies on various manpower issues and provides a mechanism for a unified approach to address specific manpower problems. Special studies are undertaken as the need arises, sometimes in cooperation with other inter-provincial committees. The meetings allow participants to exchange information and keep up-to-date on developments in other jurisdictions.

IV. Collection and Distribution of Manpower Data and Information

The mandate of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee includes the development and maintenance of inventories of education programs in health and social services disciplines and the supply and distribution of the labour force in that sector. A comprehensive and reliable database is essential in order to carry out the Committee's research activities. These inventories are maintained through several annual surveys conducted by the manpower planning unit and participating departments. Among those surveyed are employers, self-employed professionals, post-secondary institutions, professional associations and licensing bodies. The Committee is grateful to these groups and individuals for their continued cooperation and the valuable information they provide.

The data and information collected through this work is used to support the research projects undertaken by the Committee and to respond to specific requests from survey participants and the public. In addition, the information gathered is published in the form of annual survey reports which receive wide distribution. The following section describes the specific surveys conducted by the Committee and the publications produced.

A. Survey of Employers of Health and Social Service Personnel

A survey of all health and social service employers and self-employed professionals has been conducted by the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee since 1979. Currently this survey is conducted annually on March 31.

As in previous years, the survey consisted of mailed questionnaires designed for specific employer groups. All questionnaires requested the same information but the occupational categories included in each varied depending on the type of employer. The survey collected information on both regular and casual or relief personnel and solicited information on difficult-to-recruit occupations. For regular or permanent positions, data were collected on the number employed both full-time and part-time and the number of vacancies and resignations. For casual or relief employment, data were collected on the number employed and the hours worked over the past year. Employers are also asked to report the occupations in which they were experiencing recruitment difficulties and the reasons for these recruitment problems.

Day care centres were surveyed for the first time in 1988. A special questionnaire was designed for this employer group. The questionnaire collected data on regular or permanent employees and sought information on their educational qualifications, studies in progress and experience in day care centres or related settings.

In 1988, over 5,300 employers were contacted of whom 98.4 percent responded. The survey provided information on over 80 health and social service occupations. For certain occupations such as ambulance personnel, child and youth care workers, registered nurses, social workers, and dental auxiliaries, the category was further divided by level of training or area of specialization of practice. This survey was carried out by the manpower planning unit with the assistance of the Departments of Health and Advanced Education.

A report of the survey was published and distributed to all survey participants as well as interested groups such as government departments, non-government agencies and professional associations.

B. Survey of Professional Associations and Licensing Bodies

The survey of professional associations and licensing bodies for health and social service personnel was conducted in December 1988. The Disciplines Committee has carried out this survey annually since 1978.

Professional associations and licensing bodies collect information on their members which is valuable for manpower planning purposes. Such information as registrant's gender, level of education, employment status, type of employer, area of practice and annual hours practised cannot be efficiently obtained through the employer survey. However, such information is often vital for research studies and is very useful for associations in order to obtain a profile of their membership. The Disciplines Committee encourages professional associations to collect such data on an annual basis in conjunction with their registration renewal process.

Many professional groups are governed by legislation which often delegates responsibility for maintaining accurate registration data to the professional association. Registration is usually compulsory in order for professionals to practise or to use professional titles or designations protected by legislation. Consequently, comprehensive data can be collected on the professional body.

In December 1988, over 50 health and social service associations and licensing bodies were contacted by means of a mailed questionnaire. The response rate was excellent and the Disciplines Committee is grateful for the cooperation received.

The questionnaire requested registration information such as the number of members, categories of membership, number of active or practising personnel, gender, and educational background of members.

Information was also sought on the type of employment data the association collects and any research or surveys the association conducted over the past year. Questionnaires varied in the amount of information requested depending on the association to whom it was directed.

The information provided in this survey is used to supplement the information obtained through the employer survey and is published in an annual inventory of health and social service personnel.

C. Survey of Health and Social Service Education Programs

A survey of post-secondary institutions is conducted annually to obtain information on health and social service training programs and student populations. This survey has been carried out since 1978 by the Program Coordination Branch of the Department of Advanced Education.

The 1988 survey collected information for over 40 different areas of study offered through universities, community colleges, technical institutes, vocational centres, and hospitals. For each program offered, data were collected on the number of applicants, quotas, number of students enrolled by year, and number of graduates. As in previous years, the data were compiled over a five year period so that comparisons could be made and trends noted.

Graduates from Alberta's training programs make up the major portion of the manpower population. As a result, information collected through this survey is invaluable for manpower planning purposes since it enables the Committee to monitor the potential supply of health and social service personnel. Information from the survey was used to produce Advanced Education's publication on health and social service education programs and also used in the Disciplines Committee's annual publication of health and social service personnel.

D. Publications

In addition to its annual report, the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee publishes a number of reports containing information on manpower supply, demand, and distribution; training programs; and legislation governing professions. These publications are distributed widely both within and outside the province to government departments, non-government agencies, educational institutions, professional associations, employers and public libraries. Through this means, the Committee is able to share its manpower information and promote awareness and knowledge of human resource issues. Comments received from the readership are useful to the Committee in planning its work in the future. The following is a list of publications circulated during the past year:

- "Health and Social Service Personnel Working in Alberta, March 31, 1988."
- "Alberta Health and Social Service Education Programs Inventory, December 1988."
- "Health and Social Service Manpower in Alberta, 1987."

E. Information Requests

The manpower planning unit was responsible for responding to all information requests concerned with health and social service manpower. Such requests were obtained from government departments, employers, non-government agencies, institutions, associations, and the public. The Committee encourages groups and individuals to utilize its information and data for their own research studies or manpower planning. In responding to requests, the manpower planning unit is able to evaluate information needs of outside groups and plan for improvements in its data collection and storage systems.

Appendix A
Terms of Reference of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

1. In conjunction with appropriate agencies, develop on an ongoing basis inventories on:
   (i) Health and social services disciplines training programs;
   (ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.
2. Review pertinent studies, data and executive decisions from other jurisdictions on the training and supply of health and social services manpower.
3. Review short and long range plans from appropriate agencies for:
   (i) Health and social services disciplines training programs;
   (ii) Health and social services disciplines supply and distribution.
4. Review alternative requirements to meet the needs for the development of health and social services in the future.
5. Define areas of particular concern in the training and/or supply and/or distribution of health and social services personnel and recommend ways of resolving these concerns.
6. Advise from time to time on request the need for in-depth studies in particular areas of manpower training and supply.
7. Undertake such other related activities as may be required.
8. Submit an Annual Report on the activities of the Committee.

Appendix B
Membership of the Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee

Members of the Committee

Mr. Elvin A. Christenson, F.C.A., Chairman, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee.

Mr. William E. Novasky, Director, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education.

Dr. Earl Mansfield, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy & Program Development Branch, Alberta Career Development and Employment (ending February 1989).

Dr. Bev MacKeen, Director, Labour Market, Industry Analysis, Alberta Career Development and Employment (commencing March 1989).

Ms. Sharon Matthias, Executive Director, Management Support Services, Alberta Health (ending January 1989).

Mr. Don J. Junk, Assistant Deputy Minister, Policy Development Division, Alberta Health.

Mr. Dennis Gartner, Executive Director, Alberta Professions and Occupations Bureau.

Ms. Diane McAmmond, Executive Director, Family Support Services, Alberta Social Services.

Members of the Secretariat

Mrs. Frances Rawson, Executive Secretary, Alberta Health and Social Services Disciplines Committee (Professions and Occupations Bureau).

Mr. Bobby Seeber, Research Officer, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education.

Mr. Ralph Westwood, Assistant Director, Program Coordination Branch, Alberta Advanced Education.

Dr. Bev MacKeen, Director, Labour Market, Industry Analysis, Alberta Career Development and Employment (ending February 1989).

Ms. Eva Luczynska, Research Officer, Industry Analysis, Alberta Career Development and Employment (commencing March 1989).

Mr. Michael Austin, Research Officer, Management Support Services, Alberta Community and Occupational Health (ending August 1988).

Mr. John McDonough, Director, Policy Issues Management, Policy Development Division, Alberta Health (September 1988 – February 1989).

Mrs. Brenda Johnson, Manpower Planner, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Health.

Dr. Raymond W. Pong, Manager, Research and Strategic Planning Branch, Alberta Health (ending January 1989).

Ms. Valerie Richmond, Director, Planning Support, Alberta Social Services.